

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5253

As Passed Senate, February 2, 2007

Title: An act relating to veteran-owned businesses.

Brief Description: Creating a list of and decal for veteran-owned businesses.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Swecker, Hobbs, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Regala, Marr, Hatfield, Murray, Weinstein, Rockefeller, Keiser, Sheldon, McAuliffe, Clements, Kauffman, Franklin, Eide, Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/23/07 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/02/07, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Kline, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7784)

Background: The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs provides a range of services to the state's 670,000 veterans and their families. The Department provides benefits counseling to help veterans access assistance programs available to them, including education assistance and low-interest home loans. The Department also operates three veterans homes.

Summary of Bill: The Department is directed to create and maintain a list of veteran-owned businesses and to post the list on the Department's public web site. The Department must distribute decals to list-members that identify their businesses as veteran-owned.

To be eligible, a business must be at least 51 percent owned and controlled by a veteran as defined in RCW 41.04.007. Businesses may apply to the Department to be included on the list.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Service members who interrupt their personal and professional lives to serve their country away from home face a range of hardships when they return. Many service members have to shut down their businesses when they are called to serve, and when they come home they face a struggle to reestablish their business and their livelihood. The Legislature should tell veterans that they should not be hurt financially by serving their country.

Washington citizens recognize these sacrifices and want to support veteran-owned businesses, but they do not know how to find them. During the Vietnam era a logo identified veteran-owned businesses, and that provided a way for veterans to recognize and support each other. By publicizing veteran-owned businesses, this bill would allow people to express their support for veterans.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Derek Kilmer, prime sponsor; John Lee, Director, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs; Mike Partridge, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Skip Dreps, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Bob Gee, Tacoma/Pierce County Chamber of Commerce.